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Japan's First Convert.

Just now, when all eyes are turned toward Japan, it is interesting to look back to the early days when the adoption of the Christian faith was attended by the greatest personal danger. Enshrined in the memories of the Christians of Japan is the name of Murata Wakasanokami, the first convert to Christianity in the empire of the Mikado. Murata was born in 1815. Destined to be 'a foundation stone' for the edifice of Protestantism in Japan, he came into the world under the shadow of the awful persecuion of the Christians in the seventeenth century. Nearly two hun-

ga Hizen, Kiushiu. When he was a boy he became the heir of the Murata family; and when a man was appointed a minister of the Daimyo and a soldier. When English and French men-of-war anchored at Nagasaki in 1855, the Shogun commanded the two Daimyos of Saga and Fukuoko to guard the port. Wakasa was the commander of the Saga men. One day, when he was patrolling the port, he found a strange book in the water, and told his men to pick it up.

Neither he nor they whom he met and questioned knew what book it was or what its contents were. So after he returned

ported all he had heard and learned to his master. Afterward Wakasa heard that a Chinese version was published in Shanghai. He secretly sent a man there and bought a copy. Henceforth he, together with his younger brother and some friends, earnestly studied the Scriptures day and night. When his brother went to Nagasaki in 1862 to get aid in understanding the Bible, he unexpectedly met the Rev. Dr. Verbeck, a missionary of the Reformed Church in America, and he asked him many questions. Dr. Verbeck kindly taught Wakasa and others through this channel. This Bible Class lasted almost three years. These eager pupils came to understand Christianity more fully.

They grew in faith and determined to be baptized. Wakasa had to state their determination to the Daimyo, for it was a violation of the edict against the 'evil sect'; but Ayabe, his younger brother, proposed that it might be better to do so after baptism. At last, Wakasa, Ayabe and Motono declared their determination to Dr. Verbeck, professed their faith in Jesus Christ, were baptized, and partook of the Lord's Supper. This took place on May 20, 1866. Wakasa was then fifty-one years old.

When these fervent Christians on their return reported to the Daimyo what they had done, he, seeing the firmness of their faith, left them unquestioned. The Imperial Government, on hearing of Wakasa's conversion, commanded the Prince to punish him, and he burned some of Wakasa's books.

Wakasa-no-Kami's last years were spent calmly, he having retired to a villa in Kubota, in rural quietude. It is said that in those days he was engaged in translating the Bible from Chinese into Japanese. He was sixty years old when he died. Two years before his death the first Protestant church was organized in Yokohama. His memory is deeply cherished by Christians still living who in earlier days felt the power of his earnest personality.

Our Divine Accompanist.

(The Rev. F. B. Meyer, in the 'Christian Endeavor World'.)

When I was beginning a five weeks' tour in Scandinavia, a considerable burden lay on my soul. It seemed so unlikely that any real impression could be produced by addresses delivered through interpretation! Besides which, I did not know how far my way of setting forth the truth would be consistent with the methods of thought characteristic of the religious people whom I might address.

Under the oppression of these thoughts I was taking my first meal in my friend's house in Copenhagen, when another gentleman, an Englishman, who had just returned from a town in Norway, happened to narrate the following incident. It had occurred in a hotel where he was staying,



MURATA WAKASANOKAMI, THE FIRST PROTESTANT BELIEVER IN JAPAN.

dred years had elapsed since the edicts prohibiting the 'evil sect' were first promulgated and published prominently all over the empire, and since the new order that as long as the sun should shine no foreigners should enter Japan or natives leave it, and these dangerous prohibitions were still in force when Murata was born.

He was a son of Nabeshima Magorokuro, a relative of the Daimyo, or Prince, of Sa-

home, his growing curiosity prompted him to seek an explanation; and to accomplish his burning desire to know what the book was, he sent one of his men, Eguchi Baitei, to Nagasaki, ostensibly to study medicine, but, in fact, the new book. Baitei entered more or less into the spirit of his master's curiosity. He soon learned from the Dutch that the book was the Holy Bible. He caught its general idea and re-